

SB 708 -- ABSENTEE VOTING FOR EMERGENCY WORKERS

SPONSOR: Sifton (Dugger)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Elections by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill allows an emergency worker who is a registered voter in this state engaged in responding to an emergency declared in this state, in any other state, or by the federal government to request, receive, and submit an absentee ballot by mail, facsimile transmission, or electronic transmission. If the emergency is declared after the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot, an emergency worker must be eligible to request an absentee ballot until 5:00 p.m. on the Monday prior to the election. In order to be counted, the ballot must be received at or before the time fixed by law for the closing of the polls on election day.

The bill contains an emergency clause.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that recent storm events could easily have disenfranchised many emergency workers if they occurred during election periods and that the bill is designed to prevent those outcomes.

Testifying for the bill was Senator Sifton.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.